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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: January 20, 2010

Summary: Coverage of the Supreme Court's detailed judgment on the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO), which declared the ordinance "discriminatory and un-Islamic," dominated front-pages of all major newspapers on Wednesday morning. Defense Secretary Gates' statement that, if asked, the U.S. is ready to help improve Indo-Pak relations received prominent display in papers. Several major newspapers reported Senator McCain's comments to Fox News that President Zardari "is on shaky ground because of a loss of immunity" and that Prime Minister Gilani is "very pro-American." The issue of enhanced screening measures at U.S. airports continued to garner media coverage with reports that Pakistani lawmakers in the Senate have demanded reciprocal screening of American citizens in Pakistan, and that State Minister for Foreign Affairs Amad Khan has assured the upper house that the GOP is taking up the issue with the United States. Newspapers also reported a drone attack in North Waziristan that killed six people. Interior Minister Malik's praise for U.S. police trainers and his assurance to provide an "alternative location to U.S. trainers working in Sihala" received extensive coverage. Several dailies reported that the U.S. will provide funding for Peshawar Press Club renovations. All major newspapers reported proceedings of the case of Dr. Aafia, highlighting that she "yelled" at a prosecution witness. The Nation continued its conspiratorial slant, publishing two pieces by editor Shireen Mazari, alleging collaboration between the U.S. and India to destabilize Pakistan. In the piece "A two-front threat emerging for Pakistan," Dr Mazari links Indian military cross-border fire to Special Representative Holbrooke and Secretary Gates' meetings with Indian officials. Her editorial, "A dangerous connectivity," alleges that the U.S. is trying to undermine energy development in Pakistan and destabilize the country by supporting a greater role for India in Afghanistan. End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: NRO Discriminatory, Un-Islamic: SC - "Dawn" (01/20)

"The Supreme Court released on Tuesday its detailed judgment on petitions against the controversial National Reconciliation Ordinance. No law could be made which perpetuated corruption and corrupt practices, instead of eliminating exploitation of the citizens, declared the judgment authored by Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry."

News Story: Detailed Judgment On NRO Issued: Criminal Cases Can't Be Withdrawn In The Name Of Reconciliation: SC - "Daily Times" (01/20)

"In its detailed judgment on Tuesday, the Supreme Court held that criminal cases could not be withdrawn in the name of reconciliation as it declared the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) never to

have existed and against the constitution."

News Story: US Ready To Help Improve Indo-Pak Relations: Gates, Defence Secretary Says Both Sides Prefer Dealing With Their Differences Bilaterally - "Daily Times" (01/20)

"The United States will be happy to work towards improving India-Pakistan relations, if asked, US Defence Secretary Robert Gates said on Tuesday. However, flying to New Delhi, the US defence secretary told reporters that the US would like to help India and Pakistan focus less on each other and more on the terrorism threat, but the two countries prefer to settle their differences themselves."

News Story: Gates Praises India's 'Restraint' After Mumbai Attacks - "Dawn" (01/20)

"US Defence Secretary Robert Gates began a visit to India on Tuesday and praised India's restraint and statesmanship following the 2008 Mumbai attacks and remarked at how both India and Pakistan have kept tensions at a 'manageable level'."

News Story: Gates Arriving Tomorrow - "Daily Times" (01/20)

"US Defence Secretary Robert Gates will be arriving in Pakistan tomorrow (Thursday), the last stop on his visit to the region. Matters relating to the ongoing efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and rising tensions between Pakistan and India are likely to be discussed when Gates meets the country's top leadership."

News Story: Zardari On Shaky Ground, Says McCain After Meeting - "The News" (01/20)

"President Asif Zardari is on shaky grounds, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani is pro-US and Army chief Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani is doing well in taking military action against terrorists, a top Republican senator said on Tuesday. 'Pakistan is doing much better. The president of Pakistan is on shaky ground because of a loss of immunity that has been enacted by parliament. The prime minister is, I think, also very pro-US,' Senator John McCain told the Fox News in an interview."

News Story: U.S. Supports Restoration of Press Club - "The News", "Daily Times", "Pakistan" (01/20)

"U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson today announced a grant to the Government of Pakistan to repair damages and provide security upgrades at the Peshawar Press Club, following the December 22 terrorist attack on the facility."

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: US Drone Strike Kills Six In N. Waziristan- "Dawn" (01/20)

"US drone missile attack Tuesday killed at least six suspected militants in the 11th such strike targeting Pakistan's northwest Taliban stronghold this month, intelligence officials said."

News Story: Senators Demand Reciprocal Screening Of US Citizens - "Daily Times", "The News" (01/20)

"Lawmakers in the Senate on Tuesday criticized the US over the recently announced screening guidelines by the US Department of Homeland Security regarding special scrutiny measures for Pakistani passengers, demanding Islamabad put in place similar measures for US nationals entering Pakistan."

News Story: US Trainers To Be Provided Alternate Location: Rehman Malik - "The News" (01/20)

Interior Minister Rehman Malik on Tuesday acknowledged the US support for anti-terror training of Pakistan police officers and pledged to soon provide alternate training location to foreign experts working at Sihala. 'After successful US initiative; Australian and French experts would also be arriving in the country to impart modern terror-combat training to civilian law enforcement agencies of Pakistan,' Malik told journalists at the parliament

house."

News Story: Two Soldiers Killed By Indian Firing Across Loc - "Dawn" (01/20)

"Indian troops opened unprovoked firing from across the Line of Control near Rawalakot in the Keller sector on Tuesday, killing two soldiers. A spokesman for the Inter-Services Public Relations said that one of the soldiers died on the spot and the other during evacuation. He said the firing which started at 1:30 pm continued for more than two hours."

News Story: US Formally Charges Aafia - "Dawn" (01/20)

"The United States formally charged Dr Aafia Siddiqui on Tuesday with trying to kill a group of US soldiers and FBI agents at an Afghan police compound in July 2008 with a rifle she had snatched from a soldier. Dr Aafia's lawyer, however, rejected the charge, saying that there's no evidence to support the claim."

News Story: Yells at Prosecution Witness, This is not a fair trial: Dr. Aafia - "The Nation" (01/20)

"A U.S. trained Pakistani Scientist punctuated the first day of her attempted murder trial Tuesday by shouting that the prosecution's first witness was lying, prompting her to be pulled from the courtroom, according to The Washington Post."

News Story: Troops Kill 21 Taliban In Swat, FATA - "Daily Times" (01/20)

"Security forces on Tuesday killed at least 21 Taliban in various clashes in Swat and FATA, while two soldiers were also martyred. According to the ISPR, security forces exchanged fire with the Taliban near Kunar Sar area in Admi Kot, Waziristan. They killed 10 Taliban and apprehended another five during a search operation, while six Taliban were killed and five arrested in search operations in various parts of Swat."

News Story: Terrorists Murder 2 ANP Workers In Buner - "Daily Times" (01/20)

"Eight terrorists shot dead two Awami National Party (ANP) activists in Pir Baba area of Buner district on Tuesday, sources said. The sources told Daily Times that the terrorists abducted Union Council Malakpur Secretary General Amin Khan and Sultan from the village of Beshonai."

News Story: Govt For Ban On AQ's Movement - "The Nation" (01/20)

"Mr. Justice Ijaz Ahmad Chaudhry of the Lahore High Court on Tuesday issued notice to nuclear scientist Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan on a Federal government petition pleading for restraining the scientist from giving media interviews and meeting people without security clearance. Advocate Ahmar Bilal Soofi, on behalf of Federation of Pakistan, submitted that AQ Khan should be prevented from giving interviews, meeting people and moving around without security clearance. The counsel also requested the court to order immediate investigation into the claims by the author of Washington Post story about Dr. Khan being in authorized communication with him."

News Story: 4 Foreigners Arrested From Chaman Area - "The Nation" (01/20)

"Four suspected foreigners were arrested on Tuesday by security forces from bordering area of Chaman while trying to enter into Pakistan illegally. According to sources, on the basis of intelligence reports, security forces impounded a vehicle at Boghra Road of Chaman and arrested four foreigners. The security forces also arrested driver who is a Pakistani national. The sources said that they had entered into Pakistan illegally via bordering area of Chaman. According to initial reports they were Iranian nationals and trying to reach Quetta without having legal travelling documents."

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: Zardari Vows To Serve Masses, Face Challenges - "Daily Times" (01/20)

"President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday vowed to serve the people of Pakistan and face any and all challenges facing the nation. 'Those who want to learn the politics of the masses and want to be like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto should be ready to die like him as well... if they want to be like Benazir Bhutto they should stand up like her and face all challenges,' Zardari said while addressing the fourth raffle draw of the Waseela-e-Haq programme at the Governor's House."

News Story: NAB To Move Against Defaulters - "Dawn" (01/20)

"The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) is preparing to bring to book 60 defaulters of bank loans and recover Rs2 billion. According to sources, the bureau has prepared a plan to recover the amount which is likely to be approved by NAB's executive board next week."

News Story: Retrieve Money Hidden Abroad - "The News" (01/20)

"There are so many countries on whose demand, subject to determination, the (looted and stolen) wealth of the nation was reverted to those states, a clear reference to President Asif Ali Zardari's alleged millions of dollars stashed abroad, the detailed judgment of the 17-member full court on the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) released on Tuesday night said."

News Story: Premier Looks Like the Obvious Casualty In Judges Row- "The News" (01/20)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani will become the scapegoat if President Asif Ali Zardari blocks the appointments of judges in the superior courts beyond the stipulated time or maneuvers his choice appointments in violation of the Constitution or the Al-Jehad Trust case. 'In case of the appointment of judges, the president is bound to act on the advice of the prime minister, which means that any violation of the Constitution or the Supreme Court's judgments would be the responsibility of the prime minister,' former chief justice Saeeduzzamman Siddiqi told The News on Tuesday."

News Story: Nearly 200 Die In Fresh Religious Clashes In Nigeria - "Daily Times" (01/20)

"New clashes between Christians and Muslims in the Nigerian city of Jos left nearly 200 dead, a senior Muslim cleric and a paramedic said on Tuesday. State authorities placed the city under a 24-hour curfew and terrified residents reported gunshots and smoke billowing from parts of the Plateau State capital in central Nigeria. All flights to the city were suspended, aviation sources said."

ECONOMY/ENVIRONMENT

News Story: No Consensus On New Oil Pricing Formula - "Dawn" (01/20)

"Talks between the government and the industry to work out a new oil pricing formula remained inconclusive on Tuesday. However, there was a clear indication that a relief for consumers is not possible in the given situation."

News Story: Get Ready: Sugar To Cost Rs 100 Per Kg In June - "The News" (01/20)

"An apparently well-calculated delayed response by related government departments is poised to create another sugar crisis in the country that may result in sugar prices shooting to an unbelievable level of Rs 100 per kg by June this year, according to various experts and informed officials."

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: Pirzada Admits He Was Under US Intelligence Protection - "The News" (01/20)

"When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was sent to the gallows on April 4, 1979, an important member of Gen Ziaul Haq's cabinet Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada was lying unconscious in a New York hospital for heart surgery where he had been admitted under a pseudo name Robert Brown."

As the military dictator had presided over the hanging of a great leader in Pakistan, his top legal aide underwent a bypass operation by a Hindu surgeon in the US, yet under the close watch of the US intelligence. Before his admission to the hospital, the sidekick of Zia was kept well guarded in the safe house of the American spy agency."

News Story: French Minister In Scuffle With US Commander - "The Nation" (01/20)

"France accused the US of "occupying" Haiti as thousands of American troops flooded into the country to take charge of aid efforts and security. The French Minister in charge of humanitarian relief in Haiti, called on the UN to "clarify" the American role amid claims the military buildup was hampering aid efforts in the quake-hit country, one of the leading UK-based newspapers reported on Monday."

EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

Editorial: A Dangerous Connectivity , an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/20)

"Presently, it is being said that the Holbrooke visit to this region as well as the Gates visit from India to Pakistan is to pressure Pakistan into accepting a more direct Indian role in Afghanistan - to be suggested in London. There are a series of events unfolding, seemingly delinked from each other, but in reality connecting to form a larger picture which bodes ill for Pakistan. First, there is the Pakistan-Iran relationship which is being undermined by US pressure."

Opinion: A Two-Front Threat Emerging For Pakistan , an op-ed by Shireen M Mazari in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/20)

". . . India has upped the military ante against Pakistan after meetings between Indian officials and America's Holbrooke and Gates. Hence we are seeing the unprovoked Indian military firing at Pakistani forces across the international border. . . ."

Editorial: Give A Befitting Response To Indian Mischief, an editorial note in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (01/20)

"Indian military opened unprovoked automatic fire on Pakistan Rangers post at Harpal Sector, Sialkot Working Boundary.... India is indulging in aggression against Pakistan at the behest of America and Israel and is being completely supported by both the countries.... Pakistan should make a jaw breaking response to India and its backers."

Opinion: Obama's Lost Momentum , an op-ed by Shamshad Ahmad in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/20)

". . . . The graph of anti-Americanism in Pakistan as elsewhere in the world has also been sky-rocketing in recent years despite all that the US claims to be doing to help Pakistan's long-term interests as a 'friend and an ally.' There is in fact a pervasive feeling all over the world that the US is not a 'steadfast and reliable' friend, and that its self-serving policies had contributed to most of the current problems in different parts of the world, including our own region where US nuclear and defense deals with India have created serious strategic imbalances. . . ."

Editorial: Ability To Shoot Down Drones: Use This Capability Also, an editorial note in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (01/20)

"According to Inter Services Public Relations, Pakistan Army displayed the technology to target drones during the army's annual air defense exercise at Muzaffargarh flying range the other day.... The display of the technology is a welcome step, but it should also be used against drone attacks. The American drone attacks will stop only after Pakistan starts shooting the drones violating Pakistan airspace."

Editorial: Defense Is Invincible, an editorial note in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (01/20)

"Pakistan Army's Air Defense Unit has conducted a successful test of shooting down a drone... It is extremely joyous for the entire nation that Pakistan has also acquired drone technology. This has given Pakistan Air Force the extraordinary capability not only for surveillance of enemy territory but also to hit required targets. The entire nation is proud of this achievement."

Editorial: Dialogue With Taliban Is Crucial For Peace In Afghanistan, an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (01/20)

"An attack carried out by the Taliban on the eve of the oath-taking ceremony of the new Afghan cabinet held in one of the most sensitive areas of Kabul, is a clear manifestation of the fact that the U.S. and its allies have completely failed in subduing the resistance forces. Moreover, many regional powers want to see Washington entangled in this land-locked country, as they think that further American involvement will speed up United States' decline as a superpower. It has also become crystal clear that peace in Afghanistan will remain elusive until the U.S. and its allies hold dialogue with the Taliban."

Editorial: Taliban Attack On Important Facilities In Kabul, an editorial in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (01/20)

"Taliban attacked 20 important buildings in Kabul including the Presidential Palace while the Karzai cabinet was taking oath... This incident has not only exposed the allied forces' performance but also belied U.S. claims of strengthening Afghanistan domestically... If this is the situation in Kabul, one can very well imagine what Karzai government's writ would be in the other areas....Instead of asking Pakistan to do more, and carrying out drone strikes here, the U.S. should concentrate on improving the situation in Afghanistan. Along with the Afghan forces, the U.S. troops should launch a massive operation against Taliban and Al Qaeda, break their network and then think of withdrawing from the country."

Editorial: Reconciliation Need Of The Hour To Resolve Afghanistan Issue, an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (01/20)

"The growing attacks by the Taliban, including the one that carried out on the eve of the oath-taking ceremony of new Afghan cabinet in Kabul, show that the U.S. and its allies are losing this war. Meanwhile, in their statements, several high-ranking U.S. military officials admitted that Washington cannot defeat the Taliban, and advocated negotiations with the resistance forces. On the other hand, several European allies of the U.S., including France and the Netherlands, have refused to send more troops to Afghanistan. We think that the time has come for Washington to engage the Taliban politically in order to get rid of the Afghan quagmire."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)

Patterson